

# Vegetarian Tortilla Soup

By Alison Roman



Romulo Yanes for The New York Times. Food Stylist: Vivian Lui.

**Total Time** 1 1/4 hours

**Rating** ★★★★☆ (4,547)

This vegetarian version of tortilla soup is no less complex than its chicken counterpart, thanks to plenty of vegetables, spices and a secret ingredient: canned chipotles in adobo. Smoked and dried jalapeños softened in a vinegar-tomato mixture, these little powerhouses do much of the heavy lifting in this vegetarian soup, offering depth and a certain meatiness to an otherwise light and tangy broth.

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## INGREDIENTS

**Yield:** 4 servings

### FOR THE SOUP

- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 large yellow onion, finely chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 jalapeño, seeds removed, finely chopped
- Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper
- 1½ teaspoons chile powder
- 2 chipotles in adobo, finely chopped
- 1 (28-ounce) can whole peeled tomatoes, drained and crushed

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## PREPARATION

### Step 1

Heat oil in a large, heavy-bottomed pot over medium heat. Add onion, garlic and jalapeño and season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, until onion is softened and translucent, 5 to 8 minutes. Add chile powder and stir to coat. Cook a minute or two to toast the spices, then add chipotles and tomatoes. Season with salt and pepper and cook, stirring occasionally, until the tomatoes start to caramelize a bit on the bottom of the pot, concentrating their flavor.

### Step 2

Add vegetable broth, corn and 2 cups of water. Bring to a simmer and reduce heat to low. Simmer until flavors meld and broth tastes rich and flavorful, 15 to 20 minutes.

### Step 3

4 cups vegetable broth  
2 cups corn kernels, fresh or frozen and thawed

**FOR THE TORTILLAS AND ASSEMBLY**

2 cups vegetable oil  
8 small corn tortillas, cut into  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch strips  
Kosher salt  
1 avocado, pitted and cut into  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch pieces  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  cup crumbled queso fresco or shredded Cheddar or Monterey jack  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  cup sour cream or crema  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup chopped cilantro  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  red or yellow onion, finely chopped  
Lime wedges, for serving

Heat oil in a large cast-iron or stainless-steel skillet or heavy-bottomed pot. Bring oil to 375 degrees and working in batches, fry tortilla strips until light golden brown and crisp, 2 to 3 minutes. Transfer to a paper towel-lined plate and season with salt.

**Step 4**

Place about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the tortilla strips into broth and stir to submerge and soften for a few minutes. Divide soup among bowls and top with avocado, cheese, sour cream, cilantro, onion and remaining fried tortilla strips. Serve lime alongside for squeezing.

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